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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, Apr. 1, 1932

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Cleaning the Gas Stove." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A. Information on peacocks from the Bureau of Biological Survey.

Bulletin available: "Housecleaning Made Easier."

--ooOoo--

The gas man and I had a chat yesterday. He was inspecting the pipes for leaks--one of those precautions for safety that ought to be taken in every home now and then.

"I always say, Ma'm," said he to me, "I always say that you can tell what kind of a housekeeper a lady is by the way she looks after her kitchen stove. I've seen lots and lots of kitchens in my line of work. And I'm not fooled by frilly curtains nor fancy equipment. If the stove is dirty, I say the lady's no housekeeper, no matter how fancy her place is fixed up, no matter how spic and span the rest of her house looks.

"You'd be surprised," continued the gas man, "yes you'd certainly be amazed if you could see the stoves I've seen -- in nice homes too. Those stoves have been left month after month and year after year without cleaning -- grease and dust accumulating on them. That's not only untidy. It means that the stove won't work so well.

"Yes, ma'am. People send for me to come out and fix their stoves. They say the gas burners have stopped working. The trouble usually is that the gas outlets are plugged up with grease or spilled liquids. And nobody has bothered to clean them out."

The gas man then proceeded to tell me his idea of the way to treat a gas stove to get the best service from it. He advised weekly cleaning. Anything spilled on the stove should be wiped up at once with a cloth or a crumpled newspaper. Every week the surface of any stove which is in constant use should be washed with strong soap suds and then wiped dry.

The other parts of the stove should be rubbed with kerosene or sewing machine oil, then, after a few minutes, wiped thoroughly with crumpled newspapers and polished with a piece of canton flannel.

As for the burners, it's a good idea to remove them once every month or two and boil them ten or fifteen minutes in a solution of washing soda. Use

one heaping teaspoon of the soda to each quart of water. Then, rinse them thoroughly in clear hot water, scrub with a stiff brush to remove all fragments of charred food, and replace them on the stove. Now dry them out thoroughly by lighting the burner.

If the stove has become rusty, there's another cleaning problem. The gas man says that the rust may be removed by rubbing first with kerosene and then with steel wool well moistened with linseed oil. In extreme cases, the oiled steel wool may be dipped in powdered pumice. The friction will remove this heavy rust. If there is only a little rust, just rub it off with a woolen cloth dipped in linseed oil. Then wipe up any surplus oil with a clean dry cloth.

Good care prolongs the life of almost anything -- from clothes to automobiles and household appliances. All household equipment lasts longer and gives better service if you care for it properly. Something worth thinking about in these thrifty times.

So it pays to consider how to keep your household appliances in operating condition and how to keep down the cost of repairs and prolong their life. Lubrication at the proper time is one important measure for long life and few repairs. Another is proper handling. A third is keeping them dry and clean.

Your toaster, your washing machine, or your cleaner all come provided with manufacturer's instructions for their use and care. Your pocketbook will benefit if you read and observe these directions and if you preserve them for future use.

Here are some suggestions for your club by Mrs. Helen Stevens Fisher. She suggests making a big feature of the roll call, using it for a sort of profitable game. For example, at one meeting each woman responds when her name is called by giving a favorite recipe. She doesn't give the name -- she just reads the recipe -- and every other member puts down on paper the kind of dish she thinks it makes. When roll call is over, the papers are collected and the person guessing the names of the greatest number of recipes correctly gets as a prize a little recipe file.

Another stunt that is fun and is useful besides, is to give each member a list of possible left-overs in the ice box and let each one plan a luncheon menu for unexpected guests from these left-overs. And there's no opportunity to go the corner grocery or delicatessen and buy a few things to add to the left-overs. No, this is just a test of the housewife's ingenuity. Of course, she may use flour, seasonings and add a beverage. The menus are read by each member as her name is called, and the member presenting the best menu is given a reward. For instance, in one club where this was done, the list of left-overs included some cold roast beef, a loaf of dry bread, a box of salt wafers, butter, cream, salad dressing, one banana, a head of cabbage, some cucumber pickles and a little peach pickle.

Here's what one woman made of that collection of left-overs. She whipped a pint of cream and stirred it into the one banana, mashed to a pulp. She added a little sugar, and some gelatin dissolved in a very little water. This she set on the ice to stiffen for dessert. Then she chopped the meat, seasoned it and mixed it with cream sauce. This she served on toast. The

cabbage and the cucumbers and peach pickles were chopped fine and mixed with the dressing for a delicious salad.

Just a few odds and ends of news left to tell you today.

Here's a suggestion about opening your canned asparagus. You know how easily the tips are broken when you open these cans at the top. Well, try opening the can at the bottom. Then the tender tips will be spared when you empty the contents of the can.

Do you remember the peacocks your great grandfather used to keep in his garden? Do you remember how your grandmother used to save the gorgeously colored feathers and use them in a tall jar as a decoration for the parlor? Then along came some old gloomy superstitious soul and spread the rumor that peacock feathers were bad luck. So they went out of style. I've been hearing recently that peacock decorations were coming back into fashion. A pleasant thought to me, for I have a sentimental feeling for peacocks. And I maintain, good luck or bad luck, that their feathers are some of the most beautiful and decorative feathers in the world. There's a new leaflet, recently published by the specialists who make a study of birds, called "Peafowl and their Care." If you want to raise some peacocks, or if you want to read about them, you'll find this little leaflet very interesting.

According to the leaflet, there are two species of these birds -- the Indian peafowl and the Javan peafowl. But only the Indian variety has been domesticated and that not very thoroughly.

Once upon a time peafowl were used for food, but since the turkey has been domesticated, these beautiful birds have been used almost entirely for ornament.

Monday: "Eggs for the Thrifty Cook."

